

County Consultative Committee - Minutes

Date: Wednesday 9th July 2025 15:00

Meeting: County Consultative Committee comprising of Councillors' and East Sussex Governors' Forum (ESGF).

Present: Councillors Bob Standley (Chair), Alan Shuttleworth, Georgia Taylor,

Members of the ESGF: Margaret Rooms

ESCC Officers: Clare Cornford, Charlotte Johnstone, Rosie O'Brien (Minutes)

1	<p><u>Minutes of the previous meeting</u> Cllr Standley welcomed everyone to the meeting. This meeting was Cllr Taylor's first County Consultative Committee meeting.</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with no further comments.</p>
2	<p><u>Apologies for absence</u> Apologies received from John Murray.</p> <p>Apologies received from DK during the meeting.</p>
3	<p><u>Disclosure of interests</u> No interests declared.</p>
4	<p><u>Urgent items</u> No items raised.</p>
5	<p><u>Academy Update</u> Verbal update from CC.</p> <p>Grove Park school converted on 1st July to London South East Academies Trust (LSEAT). The new name is Acre Wood Academy.</p> <p>Burfield Academy and Phoenix Academy will both officially close on 31st August and will be replaced by Thornton Grove Academy. They will be located on the Phoenix Academy Site from 1st September. The newly formed school will be part of STEP Academy Trust.</p> <p>Hailsham Community College Academy Trust will transfer to MARK Education Trust on 1st September. Its new name will be Hailsham Academy.</p> <p>College Central and Flexible Learning Provision will be transferred from SABDEN to LSEAT on 1st September. The alternative provision will be known as East Sussex Academy and will be located across three sites in Hailsham, Newhaven, and Hastings.</p> <p>The Rampion Federation, comprising of Grovelands Community Primary School and Hellingly Community Primary School, has a proposed conversion date of 1st September 2025. The schools will be joining Wandle Learning Trust.</p> <p>St Richards Catholic College has a proposed conversion date of 1st October 2025 to join BOSCO Catholic Education Trust.</p> <p>Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School has a proposed conversion date of 1st October 2025 to join BOSCO Catholic Education Trust.</p>

	<p>Cllr Standley confirmed that East Sussex Academy will be moving into Burfield Academy's old school site.</p> <p>MR asked whether the creation of East Sussex Academy would mean extra provision for pupils. CC to find out.</p>
6	<p><u>LA Gov appointments and governor services update</u> Verbal update from CJ.</p> <p>Since the last meeting in March, there have been 9 Local Authority Governors nominated for appointment. All were approved for a 4-year term of office. 7 of these were reapplications, and 2 were new applications.</p> <p>When the County Consultative Committee last met, the Governor and Clerking Service discussed developing full complaints training for Headteachers, which would take them through the full complaints process. The intention of this was to be more in depth and focus on the finer details of the complaints policy and procedure. The session has been delivered 3 times and positive feedback has been received. Some feedback included that delegates found the session "extremely valuable" and governors picked up on the importance of using the Clerk during the process.</p> <p>These sessions will be continued in the upcoming academic year, and Headteachers are already engaging and booking places on future sessions.</p> <p>The team has developed training on Governor Disciplinary Committees (GDC's) that take place after a permanent exclusion. This was not provided in the previous academic year, but the team saw it was a growing area and identified it as a training need. One session was provided each for Clerks, Headteachers, and Governors. The Inclusion and Alternative Provision team supported the Governor and Clerking Service to build the training. In providing the training, the team has become more knowledgeable and have been able to continue to support and advice to schools, especially for complex cases which helps give schools more confidence when dealing with issues in this area.</p> <p>The Governor and Clerking Service team members were invited to attend the Headteacher Induction and Inspiring Leaders Programme in May. The team had the opportunity to highlight the importance of school governance. The team provided a presentation to highlight the training offered to school governors, particularly on complaints and exclusions. The team also spoke about the benefits of middle leaders becoming school governors to gain valuable CPD and experience.</p> <p>The Governor and Clerking Service are finalising the training programme for the upcoming academic year. Various new sessions include looking at Transition, Relationships on the Governing Board, how to have courageous conversations, and succession planning for Headteachers to allow boards to be prepared. The topics all support the Excellence for All vision.</p> <p>The team is working closely alongside Education Division Colleagues and Governor Consultants to develop this training.</p> <p>Since the last meeting, there have been 57 new governor appointments in maintained schools in East Sussex. This is an increase in numbers from the 52 new</p>

	<p>governor appointments reported in the last County Consultative Committee. It is not currently possible to determine how many governors have left their role. However, the team offers support with recruitment to boards and there is a steady trickle of Expressions of Interest.</p> <p>Since the last County Consultative Committee took place, there has been one new Clerk induction for a maintained school. This is a lower number than usual, but the Governor and Clerking Service are working closely with boards and their clerks on clerk recruitment and development. This means that current clerks are more open to taking on new boards, including those who have undertaken the Excellence in Clerking Programme.</p> <p>The Excellence in Clerking Programme will continue to run in the next academic year.</p> <p>Cllr Standley asked if schools who are not attending training are being monitored. CC confirmed that it is monitored, and that the team shares training and draw governors into specific sessions, and boards usually decide to attend training when a situation arises that they need support with. The team also provides bespoke advice when needed.</p> <p>CC also confirmed that courses are well attended, and governors are engaging. Cllr Standley asked if academies attend these sessions.</p> <p>CC confirmed that there are academies who buy into the service who attend, and there are academies who access the service on a pay as you use basis and attend sessions.</p> <p>Cllr Taylor asked whether Clerks only cover one board each or multiple boards, and whether they are employed by the County Council or locally.</p> <p>CJ confirmed that the Clerks are employed by the school and can choose the number of boards they support.</p> <p>Cllr Taylor asked if Clerks only have the Clerking role or if they have further responsibilities.</p> <p>CJ highlighted that some Clerks only take up the role of the Clerk, but others work in other roles within their schools such as school office staff, as they believe it is a good fit to combine the roles, but it can also cause issues where boundaries cross between roles.</p> <p>MR added that the school they are governor in, is part of a small trust with one secondary and one primary school. This trust uses East Sussex Governor Services and value it highly. Larger trusts can cross Local Authority boundaries and therefore don't buy in to Local Authority Governor Services. This becomes more common when trusts get bigger.</p> <p>Cllr Standley agreed that this can happen when trusts lie on the border between counties.</p> <p>CC confirmed that there are multiple schools within the county who buy in directly because they are standalone in the county as part of a wider trust.</p>
7	<p><u>ESGF Verbal update for councillors.</u></p> <p>Verbal update provided by MR.</p> <p>In the last Chairs Networking supported by ESGF, it was reported back that Mental Health was raised within the networking. A range of issues were mentioned including support for Headteachers, and support for governors, who can be left out</p>

	<p>but who are close to issues, and don't have the level of support services that staff members do.</p> <p>The send improvement plan was recently presented to the ESGF. Governors wonder how much will need to change because of what is in the pipeline currently. They also wonder what Councillor's visibility of the plan is.</p> <p>Cllr Standley confirmed that the improvement plan has been discussed at cabinet and full council. Cllr Standley said that the DfE SEND White Paper was due to be released in the Summer, but it will now be in the Autumn. This may mean there are further changes to the SEND Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Infant FSM Update:</p> <p>DK wrote to her MP, the letter has been included in the report provided ahead of the meeting. This is increasingly an issue in schools, the money provided by the Government does not cover the cost of meals. If the offer is expanded this means that there is more cost on schools. While the figures seem small, it's accumulative and adds up on school budgets.</p> <p>Cllr Standley highlighted that Full Council discussed this and can lobby to the Government. There is no guarantee it will be funded to the full extent, but they can continue to push this.</p> <p>MR added that it would be a mandatory cost on schools, so they have no control over the issue, therefore other non-mandatory areas miss out on funding.</p> <p>Food partnership works:</p> <p>School meals are supposed to be hot food. In a school in MR's trust, out of approximately 1500 students only 15-30 access these hot meals. Snacks are more prominent in schools, and pupils are having larger meals at break times rather than lunch which promotes bad eating habits.</p> <p>Ofsted consultation:</p> <p>The ESGF ran a session where a facilitator with an Ofsted background took the lead. This allowed governors to discuss issues and ask questions. The session proved to be very valuable and was appreciated by everyone. This allowed governors to feel like they had contributed to the process.</p> <p>MR informed the group that recently, all schools in Seaford took part in phone free week. There is no feedback yet, but this is something the schools want to follow up with at the start of the next academic year. They would like to drive this as a project going forward as the impact of mobile phones on school children needs to be actioned.</p> <p>Members agreed that it would be positive for schools to make parents aware of the ways they can restrict screen time for their children, as collective action is important to promote the issue.</p>
8	<p><u>AOI under item 4</u></p> <p>No items raised.</p> <p>Cllr Standley thanked everyone for attending.</p>

